

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently amended) A method of assaying nucleic acids by molecular hybridization, which comprises:
  - taking deep tissue samples of biological material of plant origin by a sampling device comprising means for abrasive sampling means capable of retaining biological material in the form of cells, wherein said means for abrasive sampling comprises a solid material selected from the group consisting of silica, glass, metals, carbon fibers and plastics;
  - drying the samples retained on the means for abrasive sampling;
  - isolating nucleic acids from the cells; and
  - assaying the nucleic acids by molecular hybridization.
2. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the sampling of biological material is done in the surrounding air.
3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sampling is done outside of a laboratory where the assaying will be done, and further comprising transporting the abrasive sampling means loaded with their respective samples of biological material to said laboratory.
4. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising extraction of the nucleic acids, comprising the steps of:
  - immersing the means for abrasive sampling means-loaded with their respective samples of biological material into an extraction buffer,
  - agitating the extraction buffer,
  - separating the nucleic acids, and
  - recovering clarified solution containing the nucleic acids.
5. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 4, wherein the separation step consists of a centrifugation, and the supernatant constitutes the clarified solution.
6. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the assaying by molecular hybridization is done by polymerase chain reaction (PCR).
7. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising determining the presence of a pathogenic agent in the biological material by the molecular hybridization.
8. (Cancelled)

9. (Withdrawn) A kit for implementing the method according to Claim 1 which comprises a sampling device comprising abrasive sampling means able to retain biological material in the form of cells.
10. (Withdrawn) The kit according to Claim 9, wherein the sampling means comprise a solid material comprising an abrasive outer surface.
11. (Withdrawn) The kit according to Claim 10, wherein the solid material is selected from the group consisting of silica, glass, metals, carbon fibers and plastics.
12. (Withdrawn) The kit according to Claim 10, wherein the abrasive outer surface comprises hardness capable of retaining cells of biological material.
13. (Withdrawn) The kit according to Claim 9, wherein the sampling device comprises a support able to support the abrasive sampling means.
14. (Withdrawn) The kit according to Claim 9, further comprising means for the transport of the abrasive sampling means.
15. (Withdrawn) The kit according to Claim 9, further comprising means of identification of the abrasive sampling means.
16. (Withdrawn) The kit according to Claim 9, further comprising extraction buffer for assaying nucleic acids by hybridization.
17. (Withdrawn) The kit according to Claim 9, further comprising specific reagents of PCR reactions.